1: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
MA11 Kurd MA11

539 Said the Hodja, "I have mounted a thousand steps to get up here—ask the man what he wants, and then tell me."

But the man insisted on the Hodja's coming down to him at once, so the good woman again went to call him. Finding the caller so persistent, the Hodja said to himself, "Perhaps he comes on some business matter. I had better go down."

Hurrying down the staircase, he fell and hurt himself, and, coming to the door out of temper, found there a beggar, who said:

535 "For Allah's sake, give me an *aspre!*"

"Come this way," replied the Hodja, and he led the man up the staircase. When they had mounted forty steps, the Hodja turned to the beggar and said, "Go, may Allah send thee one."[1]

"You might have said that to me downstairs," grumbled the beggar.

"Man," replied the Hodja, "thou didst bring me down a thousand steps to hear thee say, 'Give me an *aspre*,' and hast been the cause of my fall and my hurt. I bring thee up but forty steps to hear me say, 'May Allah give it thee.'"

Nasr-ed-Din Hodja and the Corpse.

539 764 One day, as the Hodja was at home washing his clothes, a man came to request him to perform the ablutionary rite for a corpse, so that it might be buried.

"I am busy," replied the Hodja; "I am washing my clothes. Go, bring the corpse here, lay it on this

[1] The usual Oriental formula when refusing a beggar's request for alms.

423 454 Because of this conviction, the legal ownership of land becomes an administrative matter of the gravest import, and the office of the director of tapu (registered land) in Rowanduz the scene of some of the most serious transactions in the area.

423 The laws of Iraq treating the tenure of land are somewhat complex, as both Quranic and Ottoman classifications are intermingled in the modern code, but only two categories need concern us here, tapu and amiriye. Tapu-land is that which has been registered and to which a title of private ownership is recognized. Amiriye-land is that belonging to the state, not only that in use for government installations, but almost all "unoccupied" land. Under certain conditions, such as occupancy over a period of 15 years, amiriye-land can become privately owned. Whenever there is a transaction in land, usually a sale, the parties concerned must have reference to the director of tapu in the area. An engineer from his office makes a survey of the land in question, which, in the form of a map, serves as a deed. One copy is given to the owner and another retained in the office.

423 735 429 A third category, which not only includes land, but also houses and other forms of property, is waqf, the religious donation. A man, for a variety of reasons, may leave his property to the Islamic faith and it becomes untaxable and inviolable. Such property is placed for the use, usually at extremely low rates, of poorer folk among

the faithful. There are in Rowanduz some 18 houses and lands which belong in this category. The administration of such property is placed under a Ministry of Awqaf, and there is a Mamur in Erbil from this ministry to supervise the use of such bequests. Locally, the supervision is not charged to the serai, but to the chief mulla (the religious leader of the community) who otherwise has no connection in government affairs.

Just as the legal ownership of land is important to the private citizen, its taxation is a primary concern of the government. Locally the collection is in the hands of the mudira, and the money transmitted through the qaimmaqam to Erbil. In taxation a distinction is made between agricultural lands and houses. Of the agricultural land, tapu-land is taxed a straight 15% of its value in terms of yearly yield. Amiriya-land which has been built upon and cultivated is subject to 30%, while that which has not been built upon, but cultivated, pays 10%. Houses, without reference to the land on which they stand, are taxed 15% of the assessed value of their yearly rent. Shopkeepers and merchants pay a series of taxes, usually in the form of licenses. Neither personal property, including gold, jewelry, or currency, nor income are taxed in the Rowanduz district. As has been mentioned, waqf or "church" property is not taxed. These revenues must be paid in money, never in kind, although property may be seized for taxes in arrears. However, the chieftains in the countryside try

flat-bottomed metal tub. The oven, made of fire-hardened clay, is a large beehive-shaped affair with its round, open mouth close to the top and the draught so arranged that the fire below is extremely hot and smokeless. When the oven is heated, the flat unleavened cakes are slapped against the inner wall of the oven near its mouth and plucked off when they are done. Even though baked one at a time, the intense heat of the oven permits the production of a great number of cakes in a relatively short period of time. The resulting product is a round, greyish-brown cake about eight inches in diameter and a half inch in thickness. As with other peoples of the Middle East, bread or nan is treated with almost religious reverence, and to maltreat it, for example, to throw it away, is regarded as the incredible abuse of a blessing.[1] Discovering this, some of the British troops stationed in Iraq used to bait their servants by kicking crusts about their messroom floor. In Rowanduz, it is customary when a man spies a fragment of bread on the ground that he pick it up, kiss it, press it to his forehead, and place it on a wall or some other spot "for the poor," a usage which was observed in the streets several times.

The hotel, khan or caravanserai, is reached through a narrow entryway between two shops near the restaurant. It is a peculiarly shaped structure, apparently built up

[1]Some idea of this is to be seen in the Egyptian colloquial word for bread, 'aysh, which in literary Arabic and in other dialects means "life".

the like underneath the conventional outer garments. 177

Civil officials wear European clothing, discarding 291
the necktie during the summer. A number affect the black wool forage cap instituted by King Feisal I. to replace the red tarbush of Ottoman connotation, rather than the usual European headgear, and others go bareheaded. It is interesting that some Kurdish officials of higher rank prefer the European felt hat, rarely worn by Arab civil servants, and this is taken as a tacit sign of what may be termed the "Kurdish resistance" to Arab rule. For un- [668]
dress attire, the official divests himself of his outer garments and puts on pajamas or the dishdasha, the cassock, and replaces shoes and stockings with open-toed leather slippers of the Bedouin type, these last not generally used by the townsmen. Schoolboys wear a curious mixture, the characteristic garb consisting of a cloth European jacket, a shirt buttoned at the neck, and the baggy white cotton trousers worn by adults as underdrawers. It remains 291
to notice that most wardrobes in the town contain a great variety of second-hand clothing of all types, Arab, Kurdish, and European, and these appear according to the taste or resources of the wearer, particularly for indoor use. Many costumes thus seem to be motley in appearance, because almost any garment is passed through the family until finally worn out. Similarly, much is transmitted from the wealthy [431]
to the poor, for clothing is a favorite benefice at the [735]
time of a festival or great occasion, such as the birth of a son, aside from everyday bequests. The servant of an

story, widespread in the Middle East, tells of one such illiterate approached by a peasant woman with a letter, apparently bringing news of her husband on the pilgrimage to Mecca. "Should I rejoice or weep?" she anxiously inquired of the mulla who was studying the document intently. "Weep," he answered after a short time, and the woman tore her garments and went into mourning, assuming her spouse to have died in the course of his pious errand. Actually, however, the letter announced the safe arrival of the man in question, a message ordinarily causing the greatest rejoicing and the preparation of a feast of welcome. When the pilgrim returned, he was dismayed to find his house closed in mourning, and asked the neighbors who gathered in great excitement about him the identity of the deceased. "God is greatest! you are dead, Hajji," they replied. The matter was speedily explained by discussion, and the whole party sought of the mulla some reason for his peculiar rendition. "If I told the wife to rejoice," returned the latter, "in the arrogance of her demonstrations of joy she might have tempted the Lord to destroy her husband," and all were satisfied with these words. There are both poor and wealthy mullas, and they are able to marry according to their status in this sense. The darwish, as a religious mendicant, is always a man of the lowest class, but, as one learned in esoteric lore, even persons of the highest status are initiated into the mysteries of the darwish orders. In Rowanduz one could find a darwish in a demented

beggar who, among other things, performed such feats as eating pebbles for alms in the shaykhanas, as well as in one of the best-educated men of the community. 792 735

Turning to the Rowanduz district, it is possible to illustrate and to amplify these general remarks. First, there is a landed, hereditary aristocracy of Kurds. As far as one can gather from the meager histories of the area, the Kurds had been ruled by independent or semi-independent chieftains for an unknown period until Ottoman and Iranian power was able to extend its rule over them. This control, usually superficial, was never solidified until after the first World War. As rulers, the Kurdish chieftains led their people in war, arbitrated their quarrels, and, to some extent, directed their economy. In return for these things, they laid claim to a certain share of annual produce, animals or harvest. In some cases the chieftainship appears to have had certain democratic aspects, the new ruler, characteristically, but not necessarily, the eldest son of the deceased, selected from a noble household by an assembly of the tribesmen. In others it was purely aristocratic. As has been seen above, chieftains are many times associated with tribes, that is to say, there is no tribe without such a leader, but otherwise they are feudal overlords. Often a chieftain can be both the head of a tribal group and the "owner" of non-tribal lands and villages. The tenure of property illustrates this. Sometimes the land and flocks are owned by the 565 174 622 619 [648] 565 622 619 423

government, and no civic or charitable organizations, guilds, or clubs. The diwankhana of the aristocrat, as noted, is often used as a man's clubhouse and a sort of village center, but that of Isma'il Beg in the town is rarely so used, and the mosque or the chaykhanas offer little as substitutes. In Rowanduz there is thus an aggregate of separate households whose relationships with the government and with each other are largely on an individual basis, and for social life a man depends to a great extent on his relatives and friends. This should not be taken to mean that there is no force to public opinion or community interest. A mutual concern is much in evidence in the public conduct of individuals and in festivals, and a large part of this is furnished by the Muslim faith. In the summer of 1951 a collection was taken up among the townspeople as a pious work for a poor Arab, arrested by the police as a suspected deserter from the army and subsequently released penniless. The effect of public opinion in such matters as the wearing of the veil or smoking on the streets during Ramadan has already been noticed. The distribution of food and clothing to the poor of the town on certain occasions, and other examples of a similar nature, will be encountered in later sections. However, there is no structural bond or concrete rules of membership which cause the townspeople to act as a whole, although such behavior can often be observed.

621
571

[602]

[735]

from the roof of the mosque five times each day. The call to prayer is like the shahada, the "testimony" of faith, given in connection with naming the child, with the addition of one or two phrases. In addition, the mu'azzin arranges minor matters related to the mosque, such as the distribution of flesh to the poor from a sacrifice for charity, but receives no compensation. The mosque also employed a servant who acted as a doorkeeper and was responsible for its cleanliness. The mulla himself, as noted in the section treating society, has a place in the highest ranks of the commoners, and is usually surrounded by a group of friends from among the townsmen, noted for their piety. Inasmuch as Mulla 'Abd al-Karim had a compelling personality, this following was an extensive and powerful segment of local society.

The mullas are responsible for religious education, because, although Islamic history is a part of the curriculum in the primary and intermediate schools, religion is not formally taught in any other place than the mosque. Some parents prefer this training to that of the government schools. The mullas hold classes throughout the year, but give particular emphasis to the summer when those children who have occupied other seasons with their secular education may, at the behest of their parents, take part. This course is almost solely concerned with reading and interpretation of the Quran, and thus entails, initially, the study of the Arabic language. The parents

At the noon
prayer on Friday many persons gather in the great mosque, 788
and between the second and third rak'as the mulla may deliver [537]
a short sermon, usually a stereotyped oration. The language
of both prayer and sermon is Arabic. It is difficult to [83]
say to what extent the townspeople are faithful to the re-
quirement of prayer, but an observably large number ignore
one or more of the five daily. Women often neglect their
prayers entirely. The tazbih or rosary has been mentioned
in the section treating dress, and may be used in devotional
exercises of a personal nature, for example, repetition of
prayers or the qualities of God. It is most often used to
occupy idle hands, however, the mind of the manipulator on
matters far divorced from religion.

In addition to prayer, a Muslim is expected to give 795
away part of his yearly earnings as alms. In the early 779
days of Islam these contributions were of two types, zakat,
a fixed proportion of the income, and sadaqat, optional
gifts. The zakat have been absorbed into the government
system of taxation, and the townspeople of Rowandus are
thus not held liable, outside of their usual taxes, to
enforced charity. Many free collections, sadaqat, however,
are made throughout the year, for example, aid for the
destitute Arab mentioned in the section treating society,
and contributions to these charities are regarded as acts
of piety. Another requirement is the duty of pilgrimage 788
to Mecca at least once during the believer's lifetime. In
spite of the high cost and the arduous character of the
journey, a surprising number of persons in the Rowandus

fasted for you and you should come to my help." Out of the night a man appeared who asked me my difficulty. He helped me get the mule to his feet and reload the rice. The two of us were walking along together, talking, and suddenly I discovered I was alone. Khidir Elyas lived long ago and God gave him such power to do good that he disappeared. This is why people ask his help while he is gone. When Jesus will come again with Ahmad the Mahdi, Khidir Elyas must be with them, for otherwise they cannot come. 773 776

Persons in Rowanduz who choose to do so fast "for Khidir Elyas" for three days in the fall. Between sunrise and sunset they do not allow themselves food, drink, or tobacco. Others distribute gifts of food or clothing to the poor. Housewives make a sweet called Halaywat Khidir Elyas which is exchanged between households at this time. The exact dates of the observance could not be obtained, save that it "came just before winter." This interesting custom does not have the sanction of the mullas and the purists in the town, and is not followed by all. 785 782 [735] [262] [431] [183]

With the Sayran and Khidir Elyas observances, the "official" faith of Islam has been left behind, and the next subject of popular religion which requires consideration is the matter of the shaykh or holy man. Occasionally, this title is aristocratic and inherited in the male line, but it is most often accorded to persons who, because of their piety and the miraculous power they seem to enjoy, have acquired widespread reputations. Such as these can be powerful chieftains, noted for their justice, or the most humble of commoners. They are reputed to have the ability to effect miracles during their lifetimes, and this power continues to exist in their graves after death. Many of 792 [778]

4: Hansen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11

pious exercises, which in the evenings alternated with those of the men within the periods of the sunset and evening prayers.

The youngest girl I saw engaged in prayer was 17 years old; the 8–12 years old I did not see pray. The humble village woman said her prayers at the places where she fetched water, where there was an opportunity to perform the small ablution. This consisted of washing the face, water being conveyed to the face in the hollow of the hands and then wiped off again by a descending motion of the palms to avoid splashing the clothes; the hands and forearms are then washed, the wet right hand being passed over the hair as a symbolical washing of the whole head. The ablution is concluded by washing the feet. At the same time the woman has as a rule first used the water basin, or the outflow of the spring from the watering place, as a latrine with subsequent washing of the private parts, so that, both physically and ritually clean, she can step onto the large flat stone, usually to be found at watering places, intended as a substitute for the prayer rug and of about the same size.

The women in the educated urban milieu of Sulaimani did not pray. I only came across one exception to this: my interpreter's younger sister, who was to marry into a family where the women belonged to the uneducated milieu, though the coming husband, like herself, was a trained school teacher, prayed industriously—at all events in the time preceding her wedding.

Among the uneducated women of Sulaimani one met piety and punctual religious observance, at all events in regard to the afternoon, sunset and evening prayers. At an evening party the prayer rug could be lent to guests, opportunity provided for ablution, and then respect accorded to the devotions of those involved. I noticed also that the women of the village aristocracy at Topzawa were afforded the same facilities during their visit to an Iraqi engineer living in one of the houses at the Dokan Dam Site. Here guests performed the ritual ablutions in a European bath room supplied with hot and cold water. However, this was not as convenient as the garden basin at home in the village. The prayer carpet was then spread out on the parquet floor of the bedroom, which on that day acted as dining, living and midday rest room for the women of the company, the living and dining rooms of the house being used as guest house by the men. The duty to give alms, I saw practised in the aristocratic village home at Topzawa. Two beggars, the younger of whom, being blind, was led by his hand being placed on the shoulder of the other, both had sugar and flour poured into their begging bags, which they carried either in the waistband or over the shoulder. Two invalid women were given articles from the family's ample wardrobe before continuing on crutches their wanderings from village to village. The women in the sheikh's home, mother and grown-up daughter, were apparently not subjected to any restriction in regard to the fulfilment of this duty, which constitutes the Islam's third pillar, even though the men of the house, the sheikh and his younger brother, who also lived in the house, were away.

The result of this obligatory giving of alms in Sulaimani is that permanently-stationed beggars are able to exist on the charity of the men in the street. With a child lying in her lap a veiled woman sat on the ground like a black cone at the entrance to the mosque in the hope of benefiting from the sense of duty of passers-by. In the courtyard of the mosque itself, a feebleminded girl was deposited every day by her parents in what looked like a European perambulator, with a bowl between her deformed hands. It was said that although there was a public institution for both the classes of beggars mentioned, they were able to manage better on the alms obligation ordained by the Coran than they would if they

4: Hansen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11

entered the institution which, so far as I could understand, hardly ranked higher than our poorhouse of former days.

The ritual fast in the month of *ramaḍān* began in 1957 on April 2nd. The thirty days during which the orthodox Muslim, whether man or woman, must refrain from eating food, solid or liquid, from tobacco, and from all sexual intercourse, from such time in the morning as it is possible to distinguish between a white and a black thread until sundown, I did not experience during my four months stay in Southern Kurdistan. Nor did I witness the concluding festival day, and the following six days, during which women who have had their menstruation period during the fast month and as a result of this condition of impurity were unable to comply with the fast, can rectify this omission.

On the other hand I did see a woman fasting on her own for a day as a result of a promise to do so[11], believing that by so doing she would bring good fortune to others. The day was July 30th, which, in 1957, corresponded to the first day in the month of pilgrimage. The fasting woman was the wife of the sheikh at Sargalu. I noticed that although she abstained from eating, drinking and smoking the whole of a long, hot day, the temperature reaching 122°F., where abstention from drinking, particularly, demanded an inhuman strength of will and self control, she attended to her domestic duties, which consisted, among other things, in milking goats, cooking and serving meals to a numerous family. Her fast was due to a promise given in connexion with the participation of a relative in a pilgrimage to Mecca, the centre and holy city of the Islamic world, a long, expensive and still risky journey.

We have now reached the fifth and last pillar of Islam, the pilgrimage, in the 12th lunar month. The Coran says in Sure 3, verse 97, that "pilgrimage to the House is a duty unto Allah for mankind, for him who can find a way thither". Out of the four feminine environments I experienced in Kurdistan, the only women I met who had undertaken a pilgrimage came from the uneducated urban milieu. Of these there were several. In a joint family that owned various shops in the *sūq* and several large cars that were hired out, a woman, her husband and an 8 year old daughter had the year before taken part in a pilgrimage by plane Damascus-Jidda, and two other women in the same family group had made the journey with other pilgrims.

The most complete information about the pilgrimage was obtained from two women of about the the same age who were married to the same business man in Kirkuk. Each had been a member of a group of pilgrims, one going the one year and the other the next. The one had taken a plane via Damascus to Jidda, whilst the other had gone by bus across the Syrian desert to Beirut, and then by ship through the Suez Canal to Jiddah. In the latter case the journey had taken about two months and had cost about 200 Din. (say £200)[12].

In the same way that the returned male pilgrims mark the greatest experience of their lives and their changed position in society by a white band around their headdress, so Kurdish women must observe certain sartorial rules after a pilgrimage. Even among women the head must never again be bared. The light head veil, *sārpāl*, must be worn even in the closest family circle, where other women are allowed to dispense with it. The arm, from elbow to hand, must never be shown naked which is